THE BOOK OF MORMON.

How the Original of the Latter Day

Saints' Scriptures Was

In an Obscure Village in Western Pennsylvania.

THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST MANUSCRIPT

IWRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.) The village of Amity, Washington county, is an insignificant and altogether unattractive place. No tradition of a thrilling or romantic character cling to the little town, but still like most other small places, its history contains one fact, which distinguishes it from other villages and which at the same time has served to make it widely known. This one fact is that Rev. Solomon Spaulding, the reputed author of the Mormon Bible lived, died and was buried there

78 years ago. Amity is most conveniently reached over the Waynesburg and Washington Railroad, a narrow gauge line, which extends from Washington to Waynesburg, Greene The only passenger train on the road will deposit the traveler who seeks the tomb of Spaulding at Hackney's station, two miles distant from the village of Amity, and then he can walk or take chances in getting to

A great many people go to Amity to see the last resting place of Solomon Spaulding, and about the first question which suggests itself to them is, why should a man of Spaulding's talents seek such a forlorn and desolate place in which to live. It is one of the oldest towns in Washington county, and it still tenaciously cling to its primitive customs and usages It seems never to have caught the spirit of improvement so noticeable in other small towns in Washington county. Perhaps the town is satisfied with the reputation it has gained because Solomon Spaulding was buried there, and will continue to hibernate during the remainder of its existence.

SPAULDING'S RESIDENCE. The location of the place is picturesque, but that is about all that can be said in its favor. It lies in a depression in a high ridge, and its dwe lings all told only number twice a baker's dozen. The houses are old frame structures, some of them log, which, weather beaten and paintless look as if they had, for 100 years, been the prey of the violent winter winds which sweep across the high hills. Its only street is the town-ship road, which, an old resident informed me, in the spring of the year, becomes so deep in clay mud that it is impassable, and the citizens of the place can only visit the neighbors on that side of the street on which

they happen to live.

The people, with a few exceptions, consist of the shiftless class, who make up the residents of most small places, where there are no industries save those carried on by the blacksmith, snoemaker and the merchant, who keeps a small store in a small way.

The men lounge about in the single store, blacksmith shop or shoemaker shop, in the winter; and in warm weather they loaf upon the mounting block or empty store boxes, and whittle them with jack knives while they talk about the trivial affairs of the neig borhood. The women of the vil-lage scrub snuff as their mothers did, and gossip about each other just as all women

If a stranger appears in the village everybody runs to the front door or window to see him. If he stops in the place a half hour without making known his business some-one will be sent to interview him as to his mission there. A gentleman with whom I talked about the Rev. Spaulding said that he passed through Amity once, and he be-lieved that every man, woman and child in the place came out to see him. He said he inquired of an old fellow why the people stared at him so, and the native replied that he was the first man who had appeared in the town for two months, and that the peo-

ple were awful glad to see him. BASIS OF THE MORMON SCRIPTURES. This village was the home of Solomon Spaulding, the author of a romance, en-titled the "Manuscript Found," upon which

the "Book of Mormon" is said to be founded;

and the little burying ground which sur-rounds the old low eaved church, contains the moldering bones of the romancer and preacher, who, it is alleged, was the unintentional creator of one of the most remarkable delusions the world has ever witnessed The grave of Spaulding is almost in the center of the church yard and is marked by a plain headstone of white marble. The stone was originally four feet high and 18 inches wide, but it has been chipped and chipped by souvenir hunters, until it is more than half gone, and a raggededged, round-topped stump of a stone is all that remains. A portion of the last two lines of the inscription on the tombstone is all that is visible. The entire inscription which was copied by Rev. Abler Jackson,

is as follows: IN MEMORY OF Bolomon Spaulding, who departed this life, October 20, A. D., 1816. Aged 55 years. "Kind cherubs, guard the sleeping clay Until the great decision day, And saints complete in glory rise To share the triumphs of the skieg."

Solomon Spaulding was of a vacillating disposition, and, although a man of talent, his life is a good illustration of the adage that a rolling stone gathers no moss. He was born in Ashford, Conn., in 1761; was educated at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, and graduated from that institution in 1785. Three years later he entered the ministry of the Congregational Church, and preached three or four years. On account of failing bealth he gave up his sacred calling, removed to Cherry Valley, New York, and engaged in the mercantile business in a small way. He succeeded no better as a merchant than as a preacher, and after a few years' trial at storekeeping, in which he lost considerable money, he again removed, in 1809, to Conneaut, Ashtabula county, O. Here he became an iron manufacturer, and built a large blast furnace. In this business, as in his former ones, he failed, and as a consequence became largely

involved in debt. He continued to reside at Conneaut for three years, and while there his attention was drawn to the great number of Indian mounds and remains of fortifications in that wicinity. Being a man of literary tastes, and particularly fond of history, he conceived the project of writing a romance which would purport to account for the exist-ence of the mound builders on this continent, and at the same time relate their history. This employment beguiled the tedions hours of his enforced leisure, and when he had completed the remance, the idea suggested itself that by the publication of the book sufficient profit would arise from the sales to enable him to discharge his indebtedness.

PREPARING HIS ROMANCE. The time of Spaulding's residence at Conneart was chiefly spent in the preparation of this historical romance. As the work progressed and the pages grew into chapters and chapters into a book, the author was accustomed to invite the neighbors to his house, where they would gladly assemble to hear each new installment read. In this small frontier settlement, where books were few, newspapers rare visitors, and mail facilities limited, each additional part of the story was awaited with the same interest that the reader of the modern magasine looks for the number containing a fresh finstallment of the popular serial. The char-

acters and incidents of the romance became subjects of general discussion, the outlines of the narrative were deeply impressed on the minds of the listeners, and the names of the prominent personages grew familiar to

At last, in 1812, with the fond hope that his dreams might be converted into something substantial, he removed to WRITTEN BY REV. S. SPAULDING Pittsburg and carried the manuscript of his romance to the printing house of Mr. Patterson, father of Robert Patterson, of Pittsburg, to make some arrange-ment for its publication. For some un-known reason, perhaps want of funds on the part of the author, or want of faith in its

success on the part of the publisher, the book was never printed.

These continual reverses crushed out all hope of success in the heart of Mr. Spaulding, and weary of the hard struggle agains adverse fate he removed to Amity in 1814 and concealed himself and his disappointment from the world in that obscure village Two years later, October 20, 1816, he died

All the accounts of the life of Solomon All the accounts of the file of Solomos Spaulding agree in essential points; but what became of his manuscript is still somewhat of a mystery and probably always will be. The great regret is that it was not published by Mr. Patterson. If the reasonably well founded supposition that Spaulding's romance is the source of Joe Smith's alleged inspired revelations, there is a possibility that its publication might have been the means of preventing the organization, or of exposing the fanciful origin, of the great trand of Mormonism. A great deal has been said and written by those anxious to of the hills of Washington and Greene counties and haul passengers and freight from Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world, and carry car loads of the same sort back into Greene into the world into Greene into identity remain undetermined.

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he can walk or take chances in getting to ride there on a farm wagon.

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